LEVET, Mayor.

Martis xix die Martii, 1699. Annoque RRs. Willielmi Tertii, Anglia, &c. duodecimo.

THis Court doth desire Mr. *Clerke* to Print his Sermon, preached at the *Cathedral Church* of St. *Paul*, on Sunday the Third Day of this instant *March*, before the Lord *Mayor* and *Aldermen* of this City.

Goodfellow.

LEVET, Mayor.

Martis xix die Martii, 1699. Annoque RRs. Willielmi Tertii, Anglia, &c. duodecimo.

THis Court doth desire Mr. *Clerke* to Print his Sermon, preached at the *Cathedral Church* of St. *Paul*, on Sunday the Third Day of this instant *March*, before the Lord *Mayor* and *Aldermen* of this City.

Goodfellow.

14

A

Lent-Sermon,

Preached at the

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,

March 3. $1\frac{699}{700}$.

Before the Right Honourable the

L^d. Mayor and Aldermen

OF THE

CITY of LONDON.

By Sam. Clerke, B. D. Chaplain to the Right Honourable the LORD CUTTS.

Optima & aptissima Pœnitentia est nova Vita, Luther.

LONDON,
Printed by T. M. for *Benj. Tooke* at the *Middle-Temple-Gate* in *Fleetstreet*, 1700.

A

Lent-Sermon,

Preached at the

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,

March 3, 1798.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Mayor and Aldermen

OF THE

CITY of LONDON:

By Sam. Clarke, B.D. Chaplain to the Right Honourable the LORD CUTTS.

Optima & optissima Poenitentia est nova Vita, Lactant.

LONDON,

Printed by C. W. for Benj. Tooke at the Middle-Temple-Gate in Fleetstreet, 1700.

To the Right Honourable,

Sir Richard Levet, Kt.

LORD MAYOR OF THE City of London.

My LORD,

PResuming it as acceptable from the Press, as pleasing in the Pulpit; I humbly Dedicate the following Discourse to Your Honour: Both, in Gratitude for Your Manifold Favours towards

 me;

me; and as a Specimen of the high Value and Eſteem all have for You, (being as Good, as Great; and no leſs an Ornament to the Chair, than That an Honour to You.)

May it be as Profitable, as Seaſonable; and but in the leaſt Meaſure promote True Piety, which I have therein endeavoured to Advance: Then ſhall I have the utmoſt intended, or deſigned, by

Your LORDSHIPS,

In all Chriſtian Duty to Command,

SAM. CLERKE.

MAT. 3. 8.

Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.

WE being Men, and bearing about us this Body of Fleſh, the ſteps whereof are ſo unſtay'd; and walking in this World, the ways whereof are ſo ſlippery: Not to fall, not to erre, not in the leaſt to do amiſs, is an higher Perfection than humane Nature can attain to. It is an Apoſtle that ſaith it, *In many things we offend all*, Jam. 3. 2. And another tells us, 1 *John* 1. 8. *If we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us.*

It is too too evident, we cannot avoid the Offence, but we may ſhun the Woe; tho' we cannot be free from Sin, yet we may get freed from God's Wrath enſuing it: The Text puts us in a way, *Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.* Is not the whole Race of Mankind, by the Fall, degenerated? Are we not all in ſome Senſe,

Pro-

Prodigals? Have we not erred and ſtrayed like loſt ſheep? Have we not left our Father's houſe; that is, by Sin ſet him at a diſtance from us, *Elongat nos à Deo Peccatum*: Sin is a Cloud of Separation, or a Wall of Partition 'twixt our God and us. Now there is nothing like Penitency to break down this Partition-Wall, and diſſipate this Cloud:

Believe it, Chriſtian Brethren! There is nothing ſo advantageous to fallen Man; nothing ſo becoming a returning Prodigal; nothing ſo proper for a Convicted Sinner; nothing ſo acceptable to GOD, nor to Man, ſo ſatisfactory, as a genuine and free Confeſſion, a ſincere and hearty Repentance; a Repentance big and fruitful in good Works: (I mean) accompanyed with Amendment of Life. The beſt and trueſt Repentance is a New Life. Humiliation is to no Purpoſe, without Reformation; Repentance for Sin, without Repentance from Sin: There muſt be *Fruits meet for Repentance*; (that is) anſwerable to Amendment of Life, Tantamount as Repentance; and that weigh juſt as much as it: *Bring forth*, &c. Theſe Words will bear a fourfold Diviſion.

1. Here

1. Here is the Act of Production enjoyn'd, *Bring forth.*

2. Here is the Matter of this Production, *Fruit.*

3. Here is the Qualification of this Fruit, *Fruit meet for Repentance.*

4. Here is the Reaſon of this Duty: *Therefore bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance.*

Firſt. As to the Act of Production, *Bring forth.* The chiefeſt end of God's Creating Man, was for His own Glory; but one great end, why God Created Male and Female, was for the Propagation of Mankind. Man muſt bring forth his, as other Creatures bring forth their Kind: God therefore had no ſooner made an Help-meet for Man, but His Command was, *Increaſe and Multiply.* Now as the Production of Children was one thing enjoyn'd the Firſt *Adam* and his Sons, *Gen.* 1. 28. ſo is Production alſo enjoyn'd the Sons of the Second *Adam* by this His Harbinger St. *John Baptiſt*: *Bring forth*; and if you ask, What? In the

Second Place you are reſolved, *Fruit.* In that the *Two Kidneys, and the Fat that is upon them, and the Cawle over the Liver*, and the other inward Parts were reſerved for the Altar, and Dedica-

ted to God, *Lev.* 4. 9. Doth it not teach us (as *Pellican* noteth on the Place) that we ſhould offer the uſe of all our Members in Obedience to God? Good Men ſhould abound in good Works; and Chriſtians in Name, ſhould be Chriſtians in Deed. Hence is that of St. *Paul*, Phil. 1. 27. *Onely let your Converſation be, as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.* Onely, As much as to ſay, it is Κεφάλιον τῶν εἰρημένων: It is the main and chief Charge I lay upon you; it is the upſhot and ſum of all my Exhortations to you: Let this therefore ſink deep into your hearts, mind this, and above all things remember it; that your Converſation be Chriſtian like, and ſuitable to the Goſpel.

Sad is it, when our Lives anſwer not our Profeſſion: When our Practices bear no proportion to our Speeches. Such as ſay, *Lord, Lord, but are Workers of Iniquity*, they are like coarſe Cloth with a fine Liſt: They look white like Silver, but draw black Lines. They are meer Impoſtures, ſuch Chriſtians, that would couſen God of Heaven, if they could; putting upon Him falſe Coin a little ſilver'd over, and circumventing Him, if it lay in their power. But as St. *Bernard* ſpeaketh truly, *Sapiens Nummularius Deus eſt, Nummum fictum non recipiet*: God is a wiſe Mint-man, there is no beguiling Him with

Counterfeit Coin. Let us therefore, I beſeech you dear Chriſtians, weigh well what we do: Shall any of us preſume to impoſe upon Wiſdom it ſelf? Who has ſuch a ſtock of Impudence, as dares to give God the Lye? Now for a Man to ſay he is a Chriſtian, and not follow Chriſt's Example, is to lye, and contradict himſelf. There is a Lye in Works, as well as in Words, *Hoſ.* 11. 12. *Ephraim compaſſeth me about with lyes, and the Houſe of Iſrael with deceit.* That is, they profeſs one thing, they do another. They have the ſhell of Godlineſs, but want the kernel; they have the form, but deny the power. The form of Religion (which at beſt is but a ſlight Mark) is not that God will be ſatisfyed with: He requires a deep ſtamp and impreſſion. The Mark is a ſeeming to be Religious; the deep ſtamp is the bridling of the Tongue, the viſiting of the Fatherleſs and Widows, and the continuing unſpotted from the World. Theſe, and the like Works, formal Chriſtians have no mind to: Who will be God's Servants, but they will chuſe their Labour. My Meaning is, they are mighty buſie about the means and inſtruments, but neglect its end: They are hugely zealous in matters of Devotion, and Religious Ordinances; but utterly careleſs of all manner of Vertue and

Moral Goodneſs. Now abating the Hypocritical Abuſes of religious Ordinances; ſuppoſing Men to be as ſerious in them, as their Importance requires; yet as inſtrumental Duties, and commanded only in Order to ſomething of greater Excellency: Whenſoever they are ſeparated from their end, they muſt be alſo ſeparated from their Goodneſs, and are as empty of all ſolid Piety, as were all the carnal Services of the *Phariſees*, without an inward and ſpiritual Obedience.

What is it to be curious to waſh our Hands, if incurious to purifie our Hearts? What is it to ſtarve and faſt away our Corpſe, if we feed and pamper our Luſts? What is it not to rob, if we defraud and oppreſs our Neighbours? Or while we relieve our Brother; at the ſame time to hate and deſpiſe him? It is no better all this, than to let go the Body and Subſtance of Religion, to purſue its Shadow and Appearances: 'Tis no other in God's repute, than to make *the Means of Grace* become a Servant to Impiety; the outward Form of Religion, a Diſguiſe for Hypocriſie; and the Inſtruments of Piety, engines to undermine what they were ordain'd to advance. In the Scripture Phraſe, ſuch *profeſs they know God, but in Works deny him, Tit.* 1. 16. Fye Chriſtians! How is God's Name diſhonoured, by

by ſuch Profeſſors of his Name? The ſincere Chriſtian ſets himſelf to a ſerious minding of true and real Goodneſs: He values his Devotions, not by his Zeal and Frequency, but by their Succeſs and Efficacy; and as they influence his Life, ſo he eſtimates them; according to that of St. *Jerome*, *Inter Chriſtianum & Gentilem, non Fides tantum debet, ſed Vita diſtinguere, & diverſum religione, per diverſa opera monſtrare, Hier. ad Celantiam.* Not only Faith but Life, muſt diſtinguiſh between a Chriſtian and a Gentile; and we muſt ſhew a diverſe Religion, by diverſe Works. The Rules of Chriſtianity are Modeſty, Juſtice, bearing of the Croſs, Conſtancy in the Profeſſion of Godlineſs: Yet what confident Boldneſs is in our Streets? What Injuſtice is in our Land? What Pampering of the Fleſh? What Intemperance? What Lukewarmneſs in Religion?

We profeſs a Goſpel of Mortification, of Humility, of Self-denyal: Yet how vain? How proud? How faſhionable are we? How little Regard have we to anſwer this Goſpel Profeſſion?

Think you, Beloved! That the bare reading the Scriptures, and the frequent having the Book of Chriſtian Learning in your Hands, is enough to denominate you Chriſtian Men and Women? May you call your ſelves the Diſciples

of

of our Saviour, becauſe you turn over ſome good Books, and hear good Sermons? No ſuch matter; there is more in it than ſo: For our Actions, our Lives, theſe muſt ſhew what we are.

Covetouſneſs and Love of Pleaſure, tells us plainly, that we are Idolaters and dead in Sin: Our Murmurings and Diſcontent beſpeak us rather (with that prophane *Cardinal*) to prize our part in *Paris*, above that in Paradice: Or with ungrateful *Iſrael*, to prefer *Ægypt* before *Canaan*. Pride and Study to be admired in the World, proclaim us Deviliſh and Vain-glorious.

To give a Proof of our Humanity and Chriſtianity too; to convince the World, that we are not turned unreaſonable Creatures: We muſt live according to our Reaſon; we muſt practice our Religion; we muſt prefer our Souls before our Bodies; and the Concerns of our immortal Being, before the Trivial Enjoyments of a few Moments. What elſe means that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. that we ſhould *not be carnal, and walk as Men; but ſpiritual, and walk like Chriſtians?* Chriſtians are not diſtinguiſhed from others by outward Faſhions and Modes; not by their external Forms and Molds into which they are caſt, not by profeſ-

ſing

ſing a Body of Notions differing from others in the World; but they are diſtinguiſhed by the renewing of their Minds, by the Peaceableneſs of their Thoughts, by Charity and Heavenly Love, by pious and Holy Lives. Chriſtianity binds us to live anſwerably to the Goſpel of Chriſt. The two Diſciples thought it enough to live as *Elias* did, and to ſeek for Vengeance on their Enemies: But Chriſt tells them they are called to another Spirit.

The Spirit of the Goſpel is a Spirit of Meekneſs, it is a Spirit of Patience, it is a ſelf-reſigning Spirit, it is a Spirit of Love; of Love to God, even to the Loſs of our Lives; of Love to our Neighbours, even to the Love of our Enemies. In ſhort! The Spirit of the Goſpel is a Spirit of Holineſs; and all that partake thereof are holy. They *grow in Grace*, (as St. *Paul* ſpeaketh) or according to the *Baptiſt's* Injunction in my Text; *They bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance.* Give me Leave a little to expatiate on the Chriſtians Fruitfulneſs, grounded on a two-fold Foundation. 1*ſt.* Their Name. 2*d.* Their Relation. As to their Name,

Firſt, They are ſometimes called Believers, ſometimes Chriſtians; two diſtinct Denominations

ons we grant them, but in Subſtance they are the ſame thing.

However, If there be any Difference, in this they are alike, they both require Fruitfulneſs; and as in that which is evil, not to go backward, is to go forward: So here; not to go forward, is to go backward. Believing Chriſtians muſt not be at a ſtand, till fixt in Heaven: For,

1. Whence have they their Name? Is it not from their Faith in Chriſt? Now Faith, if it be not operative, it is not at all. We read, *Lev.* 9. 17. that the people were to burn their own Sacrifices, *beſides the burnt Sacrifices in the Morning.* Their own Sacrifices! What can this import, if not, as Dr. *Willet* on the place, That we ſhould not relye upon the Speculation of Faith only; but muſt alſo labour to bring forth the Fruit thereof? St. *Paul* beſeecheth the *Corinthians, Not to receive the Grace of God in vain,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. And St. *Peter* exhorts us, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. *To add to Faith, Virtue; to Virtue, Knowledge; to Knowledge, Temperance; to Temperance, Patience; to Patience, Godlineſs; to Godlineſs, Brotherly-kindneſs; to Brotherly-kindneſs, Charity.* Intimating thus much to us; that a Faith without virtuous Works, is but dead and fruitleſs. A Faith that worketh not, is a Faith that ſaveth not; as St.

St. *James* insinuates, when he calls it vain. True Faith, as it is a Grace most needful; so it is a Grace most fruitful. Fruitful on our side in good Works; fruitful on God's side in a plentiful Reward; for it is no sooner given of God, but it gives God. So soon as thou believest, O Christian! Christ is thine, and all else whatever is his: The Merits of his Passion; the Virtue of his Resurrection; the Comfort of his Ascension: He being gone before, to prepare Celestial Mansions for you. He that gives us Christ, will also with him *give us all things*, *Rom.* 8. 32. Faith doth identifie God, and the godly: My God, saith *Daniel*, when he declares his Deliverer; and a Believing *Thomas* crys out, *My Lord, and my Christ*. Seeing now, that Faith doth thus identifie God and Believers, it necessarily follows, that they must have God-like Qualities, and abound in doing good. They must bring forth Fruit as Believers. This the First.

As Christians, we must be Fruitful; and that not only because we bear the Name of Christ, but because we were purchased with the Blood of the Holy *Jesus*. We were his before; for he made us, and upon this very Account, we owe him our Service: But we are now more his

than before; for he hath made us, and payd for us: We therefore much more owe him our Service for that. The great Benefit of our Redemption, Oh how ſhould it oblige us? The Apoſtle urgeth it as a Matter of great Equity, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *What? know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a Price: Therefore glorifie God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are Gods.* Chriſt dyed for us, that we ſhould not henceforth live unto our ſelves, but unto him, 2 *Cor.* 4. 10, 11. When Chriſt redeemed us by his Blood, his purpoſe was to *redeem us unto God*, *Rev.* 5. 9. His deſign then was to redeem us from our vain Converſation, not to it. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. God therefore *delivered us from the hands of our Enemies, that we might the more ſecurely, and without fear, ſerve him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, all the days of our Life*, Luk. 1 74.

This, this is our Duty; it is our reaſonable Service, and we have much to Anſwer for, if we make not conſcience of it, to perform it accordingly. How doth the Prophet *Jeremy* upbraid the Jews? *Jer.* 7. 10. Will ye *ſay*, *we are deliver-*

ed

ed to commit all theſe Abominations? Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye fooliſh People, and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father which hath bought thee? Thy Father, not by Creation only, but by Redemption too: Now our Redemption, our Holy Calling, what doth it but call unto Holineſs? Our Adoption, and being made not only Servants but Sons, Doth it not require a ſuitable Converſation? It ſhould beget in us St. *Pauls* Reſolution, *Whether we live, that we live unto the Lord; and whither we dye, that we dye unto the Lord.* God hath done his Part in Creating us, and Chriſt in Redeeming us; Let us Chriſtians do ours, in faithfully ſerving the Lord, which nothing can better prompt us to, if we have any Ingenuity in us, than oft thinking of our Redemption by Chriſt; for this end we make uſe of the means of Grace. Do we not partake of the Lord's Supper, as it is a ſtrengthening Ordinance to fortifie us againſt *Sin*, and corroborate our Graces? Do we not go to hear the Word of God, to improve our ſelves by it, and walk according thereunto? We muſt hear to do, or we do nothing: For if we be barren Chriſtians, whatever we talk of our Profeſſion, whatever we boaſt of our Knowledge, or our Honourable Names,

all is to no effect or purpose. Christians must live answerably to their Names; we must in Gospel-Times live up to the Benefits of the Gospel, we must be fruitful Christians. So much of the Name.

In the next place, our relation to Christ calls for Fruitfulness: And that

First, As we are Branches of him the Vine: What more fruitful than the Vine is? Is it not fruitful among the fruitfulest? Every one knows it, I shall not need discourse of it: Nor need I insist on the

Second neither; which is, that we are the Spouse to him our Husband: For, for the Spouse of Christ to be fruitful, what can be more natural? And so I have done with this Particular, *We must bring forth Fruit.* I pass now from the Fruit to its Qualification, which was the

Third in course: *Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; that is, *Fruits of Righteousness and of Holiness*: Fruits contrary to the Sins and Unrighteousness we have lived in before, *Rom.* 6. 19. Like *As ye have given over your Members to the Service of*

Un-

Uncleanneſs, from one Wickedneſs to another: So now alſo give over your Members to the Service of Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs.

To this end, Chriſt was born into the world; to this end, Chriſt lived here amongſt us; to this end, Chriſt preach'd his Goſpel to us: Even that we by his Example, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel, might lead an upright and pious Life. Newneſs of Life becomes new Creatures, ſuch as the reclaimed Penitent is. If we have been paſſionate, we muſt now be patient, and bear one anothers Burthens, as the Holy Ghoſt does ours, *Rom.* 8. 26.

Συναντιλαμβάνεται, is the Word in the Original; *He helpeth our Infirmities*: that is, he worketh together with us, and ſtrengthens us being weak. If we have been Envious, if Defrauded any, we muſt now make Reſtitution, and be Charitable. If we have been Earthly, we muſt be the more Heavenly; and if Covetous, we muſt be the Freer to do good.

If we have been Profuſe, we muſt be the more Sparing; and if Careleſs of our ſelves, we muſt be the more Watchful. If we have been Proud, we muſt be the more Humble; and if Incontinent, we muſt be the more Chaſt. Have

any

any ſinned through exceſs of Luxury? Let them not run themſelves more into Temptation: Let them not purpoſely open their eyes, (thoſe Caſements of Uncleanneſs) to let in every Object that may provoke to it; Let them not frequent ſuch Company that they know will heighten it: But let ſuch take ſome holy Revenge upon themſelves by Abſtinence, and bring under their Bodies. We ſhould all do as St. *Paul* did, not pamper, but pluck down our Bodies: ὑπωπιάζω μου τὸ σῶμα (ſaith he): The Expreſſion is of great Import. I beat it down, I club it down, I beat it black and blew: So emphatical is the ſignification of the Word. St. *Auguſtine* after his Converſion, was tempted by his bad Companions; he retracted his Errors, and reformed his Life: He ſhook them all off, with an *Ego non ſum Ego*; I, am not I. Such my Brethren were the Life of Chriſtians in the beginning of the Church; they ſubdued their Fleſh, they mortified their Members, they gave them over wholly unto Chriſt. As they had before yeilded their Members Servants of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin; ſo afterwards they much more yeilded them Servants of Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs.

To

To have the Name, and not the Goodneſs of Chriſtians, is odious in the Eyes of an Holy God: Therefore in ſhort, to be really what we our ſelves profeſs, and our Chriſtian Names beſpeak us: We muſt be as fruitful in Holineſs, as ever we were in Wickedneſs; we muſt double our Diligence for the time loſt, and muſt *bring forth fruits* anſwerable to the moſt precious Opportunities God graciouſly affords us: This for the Qualification of the Fruit we are to bring forth; *Bring forth fruit meet for Repentance.*

The Reaſon follows in that Illative therefore; *Bring forth therefore fruit meet for Repentance.* Which refers to a cogent Argument, drawn

1. From the Approach of the Kingdom of God, *verſe* 2.

2. From the Wrath of God at the Day of Judgment.

3. From the preſent Judgement hanging over their Heads, *ver.* 10. Time will not permit me to diſcuſs theſe particulars; therefore briefly ſomewhat by way of Improvement, and I have done.

Firſt, Is it ſo, that we muſt *Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*? Then this teacheth us, that only that which is Spiritual and Holy can be poſſeſs'd of Heaven: There's no Happineſs without Holineſs.

neſs. *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God, Matt.* 5. 8. As God is of pure Eyes, and cannot behold Iniquity with the leaſt of Approbation; ſo Sin is of dim and dark eyes, and cannot behold God with eyes of Joy. Sinners can look upon God no otherwiſe than as the Bat, the Owl, or weak eyes do on the Sun, at which they are much grieved. Sin is contrary to the Nature of God; He therefore cannot harbour Sinners in his Boſome. *Know ye not, that no unrighteous Man ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. 6. 9.

Tho' we abſtain from foul Sins, if we wilfully commit any, we ſhall never get to Heaven without this genuine Repentance. By this the Children of God become victorious, and triumph over Sin. As a King (who may have Rebels, and may be wounded too, yet) keeps his Power ſtill: So the Saints and Children of God may have many Infirmities, many Failings, many Slips, nay ſome ſound Falls; yet in the end they Riſe again, and get the Victory. Nor marvel at it, for *Eph.* 2. 9. They are *God's Workmanſhip*, created to good Works. The expreſſion is worth our Note, *Created to them*; that is, not only purpoſed and intended to abound in good Works, but alſo enabled and fitted for them. In the Creation every thing was ena-

enabled to live after their kind. 'Tis true, the beſt of Men may ſin (indeed as Men, they cannot avoid it;) but the Godly Man's heart (like a troubled Fountain) tho' muddy, it having a Spring within, worketh it ſelf pure again, and purgeth out all the Mud. He is not to learn, that God hath coupled together Grace and Glory, Holineſs and Happineſs, a ſpiritual Birth, and a ſpiritual Inheritance.

Many would be happy hereafter, but will not be Holy here Many would be glorified Saints in Heaven, but will not be mortified (not to ſay) crucified Saints on earth; but this is far from right: The reaſon is, becauſe we cannot be juſtified, if not ſanctified; nor glorious, if not gracious. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Follow Peace with all Men and Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

Alcibiades was too timorous, who being called from Baniſhment, refuſed to return; and being asked, if he durſt not truſt a Country, anſwered, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα, περὶ δὲ ψυχῆς τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐδὲ τῇ μητρὶ, μήπως ἀγνοήσασα τὴν μέλαιναν, ἀντὶ τῆς λευκῆς ἐπενέγκῃ ψῆφον. In every thing elſe he would, but in the Queſtion of his Life, he would not truſt his Mother, leaſt ignorantly ſhe ſhould miſtake the black Bean for the white, and intending a Favour, ſhould do him a

Miſchief. Such a ſlaviſh Fearfulneſs as this towards God our Heavenly Father, would greatly miſ-become Chriſtians; for there can be no better Security in the World, than they have, for the Hope and Confidence of a future well-being.

As God is our Creator, He is faithful; as our Redeemer, He hath purchaſed our Souls at a dear rate; and as our Lord, they and we are his own. But yet, this expectation of divine Mercy (as to the Iſſue of our Souls and final Intereſt) muſt be in the Ways of Piety, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. *Commit your Souls to God in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* We muſt live to Him, if we will live with Him.

Oh let us at length live holily and blameleſsly! Let us conſider, that it is Purity of Life that God requireth of us. *Let our Bodies be a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God,* Rom. 6. 3, 4. And as the ſame bleſſed Apoſtle adviſeth in another place; *Make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, whereby to fulfil the Luſts thereof; but put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, adorn his Doctine by a Conformity to his Life.

Put on his Modeſty and his Temperance, in a perfect Oppoſition to Rioting and Drunkenneſs; put on his Chaſtity and Purity, in oppoſition to Chambering and Wantonneſs; put on his Bowels and his Mercy, in oppoſition to Strife and Envy.

A King's Court is no common Receptacle for ragged Rogues: *Joseph*, in the forlorn Fashion of a Prisoner, was not fit for *Pharaohs* Presence. Tho' the Serpent might come into the earthly Paradice; yet no unclean thing shall enter Heaven: There is no Room for the Serpent there. *It is an Inheritance undefiled*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. Sin hath a defiling Nature; so that if Sin might enter Heaven, it would soon pollute it: Hereupon the Angels in the very first Act of Sin were thrown out with a Vengeance. Now can we think to come thither with our Iniquities? The *Irish* Air will sooner brook a Toad, or a Snake to live therein, than Heaven a Sinner; the Air of the Place cannot indure it. Oh what horrible Presumption is it? What Saucineſs unspeakable? When gross Sinners shall think themselves fit Companions for the most Holy Trinity. For us, dear Christians! To have God in the end, say, Come and reign with me: We must now say to him, Come and reign in us. Oh let it be the continual Breathing of our Souls, our serious Option, and most ardent, as also daily Prayer, this: *Lord, rule thou over us!* For we may assure our selves, if we in this our day bid God depart; He will in his send us packing to the Devil and his Angels: But if we live as becometh the Gospel of Christ, Bliss shall follow Piety.

In the Compoſition of the World, the higher Place any thing hath, the Purer it is: As Water is purer than the groſs Earth; Air than the Water; Fire than Air. Now the third Heaven being above all, ſhews the Purity that muſt be in thoſe that dwell there. *Fair as the Moon, pure as the Sun*, Cant. 6. 9. Is not this more than inſinuated by the Apoſtle, *Col.* 1. 9. in theſe Words? *Who hath made us meet to be Partakers with the Saints in Glory.* Oh let us not fondly think, that a pure Place will receive impure Sinners! Was Satan once baniſhed Heaven, to re-enter again in his wicked Members? Did Heaven ſpue out the diſobedient Angels; and ſhall it lick up its Vomit again? The groſs and heavy Earth, which to Heaven is but as *Sodom* to *Jeruſalem*; ſhall it be impatient of bearing ſuch Burthens as filthy Sinners? Shall it caſt them out? And ſhall Heaven, all pure and clear, receive the Refuſe of the Earth? No, onely that, that is Pure and Holy, can enter the Cœleſtial Paradice. Thoſe that have Admittance there, muſt *bring forth fruit meet for Repentance.* This the 1ſt. Uſe.

2. Muſt we *bring forth fruit meet for Repentance?* Then let us dung the Ground, that it may be fruitful. Let us be diligent in the means appointed by God for this end. *Give all Diligence to make your calling*

ling and Election ſure, ſo St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. It is our preſent Buſineſs to make ſure of future Happineſs; which cannot be done (as hath been all along inſtill'd) but in the Ways of Piety. This the 2*d*.

3. Muſt we *bring forth fruit meet for Repentance*? Then let us labour more for inward Purity, than outward Proſperity. *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth, but for that which indureth to everlaſting Life*, John 6. 27. Let us labour to be truly Pious, to be truly Godly.

While we live, we ſhall find Godlineſs gainful; and nothing ſo ſure, as that when we die we ſhall find it needful. *Let us therefore ſet our Affections on things that are above, and not on things that are below*, *Col.* 3. 1. And as the Apoſtle proceeds, *ver.* 2. *Let our Converſations be in Heaven.* Inward Piety is the beſt Friend to outward Proſperity, but it is not convertible. Very rare it is, if ever; that outward Proſperity is other than an enemy to inward Piety. The things of this Life have not the Promiſe of Godlineſs; but *Godlineſs* hath the *Promiſe* of the things of this Life, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8: And as to the Concerns of another, a better World, we have heard before; that Faith, Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance and Patience, without Godlineſs, are all vain: What an excellent Jewel then muſt Godlineſs needs

be?

be? And who would not part with all for it? Who would not with St. *Paul* count all things but droſs and dung in Compariſon of it?

Oh, what is Darkneſs to Light? What is Sin to Holineſs? What is Gold to Grace? What is Earth to Heaven? That we ſilly Creatures ſhould forfeit the one, by too much prizing and dotage on the other? Is it not beneath a rational Being to neglect great and weighty things, and buſie themſelves in Toys and Trifles?

When we have a Crown to look after, an Heaven to enjoy, a Kingdom to be made Heirs of: Shall we employ our ſelves about catching Flies, and picking Cockles?

To conclude: I beſeech you all dear Chriſtians, as you tender the Welfare and eternal Happineſs of your truly precious and immortal Souls: Labour more for inward Holineſs, than outward Grandure: Labour more for Piety, than Plenty: Labour more for the Seeds of Grace, than the Maſs of Gold: And Labour more for an heavenly Converſation, than an earthly Poſſeſſion. The Earth is for a Saints Paſſage, but Heaven is for his Inheritance: Which to enjoy, We muſt *bring forth fruit meet for Repentance.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, in Perſons Three, in Eſſence One, be aſcribed and given as is moſt juſtly due, All Honour, Glory, Praiſe, Dominion, Obedience, and Thankſgiving, now and for evermore, *Amen.*

Δόξα μόνῳ τῷ Θεῷ.

FINIS.